Regional Growth Fund

Background

The LEP is overseeing a £13m Regional Growth Fund investment programme in the county, which consists of 3 elements, all of which have a principal focus on job creation.

This is delivering a significant number of new high value jobs and is also used to complement ERDF investments in order to maximise the economic impact. Although most funds are committed, those jobs are profiled to be created up to and including the financial year 2018/19 and therefore remains relevant in the Local Assurance Framework for the LEP.

CC is the Accountable Body and day to day management and administrative functions are carried out by CDC.

As mentioned above RGF forms part of the Business Boost suite of programmes.

Assessment and risk management

The assessment and risk management for the RGF programme is extensive and structured. It has also been designed to complement the wider business support elements of ERDF (e.g. the Business Investment for Growth Programme) through the Business Boost initiative.

In the context of the Business Catalyst and Superfast Cornwall Funds, each bid goes through an Expression of Interest and Full Application process and assessments are undertaken by CDC before a decision is taken by the relevant representatives from the LEP and CDC.

The applicant is asked to assess the risks that the project faces and to set out mitigation actions to minimise these. In addition, at assessment stage, the risks will be checked and comments will be added where there are additional factors to take into account, which may result in conditions added to the recommendation made to the decision makers.

Value for money analysis comes from all these factors but it retains the focus on job creation by assessing the "cost per output". The programme has a clear target in terms of the amount of investment per job and each assessment will use this value for money test to ensure that the projects are contributing.

The process for the Strand 2 (Enabling Infrastructure) element of the RGF uses a slightly different assessment model which is tied to the ERDF procedure. This is deliberate to ensure that the investments are being used to maximise impact but also because many of the projects are significant infrastructure projects over a longer period. It also enables the fund to be closely tied to the ERDF model to ensure value for money and that the decisions taken are properly co-ordinated given the size of many of the projects.